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A VISIT
TO CARLYLE'S
ANNANDALE



W. L. RICHARDSON

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THOMAS CARLYLE

"Work, and despair not: *Wir heissen euch hoffen*, 'We bid you be of hope!'—let that be my last word."

^o
**A VISIT TO
CARLYLE'S ANNANDALE**

**BY
W. L. RICHARDSON**

**"Mein Vermächtniss, wie herrlich weit und breit!
Die Zeit ist mein Vermächtniss, mein Acker ist die Zeit."**

—GOETHE

**"My Inheritance, how lordly, wide and fair!
Time is my Inheritance, to Time I'm heir."**

(As translated by Carlyle)

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By Mr. William L. Lenhart

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FOREWORD

MY introduction to the writings of Thomas Carlyle took place in the autumn of 1892 when I secured a poor little edition of "Heroes and Hero Worship" for the sum of eighteen cents in a department store on State Street, Chicago. I am particular to mention the circumstance for it constituted, on the intellectual side, a momentous event in my simple history. The book opened to me a new world. I have it yet and I would not part with it willingly.

The impression which that book conveyed was deepened through the reading of others of Carlyle's characteristic writings—the "French Revolution," "Past and Present," the *Reminiscences*, the letters to Emerson, and, above all, "Sartor Resartus"—full of winged words, lofty ideas, shrewd wisdom and prophetic fire. "What can you say of Carlyle," Ruskin asked, "but that he was born in the clouds and struck by lightning!" This hits upon the essential thing, though it does not tell the whole story.

I know not whether it is common for the young men of to-day to give their days and nights to Thomas Carlyle, but I am thankful at all events for my youthful enthusiasms in that direction.

After the passage of twenty years that name remains for me one of the most significant in the whole range of English letters.

Small wonder that on my first visit to the mother country (in the summer of 1904) I made my plans to spend a few days in Annandale, the home of Carlyle. A week for Glasgow, the Burns country, the Trossachs, Edinburgh, and the land of Sir Walter Scott—then southwards on my Carlyle quest.

The sketch here given makes no pretensions. Indeed it is written largely in the words of the letters that I sent home at that time. My friends—for whom I have prepared this booklet—will perhaps be content not to play the part of critics, but will take the journey along with me to the home of Carlyle, ready to enjoy what they can and to make no complaints at what they cannot, after the wise custom of all good travelers.

"Rustic Annandale, with its homely honesties, rough vernacularities; safe, innocently kind, ruggedly motherlike, cheery, wholesome, like its airy hills and clear-rushing streams."

(Carlyle's own tribute)

**"The Future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow;
We press still thorow,
Nought that abides in it
Daunting us,— onward.**

**"And solemn before us,
Veiled, the dark Portal;
Goal of all mortal:—
Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent!**

**"While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error;
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.**

**"But heard are the Voices,
Heard are the Sages,
The Worlds and the Ages:
'Choose well; your choice is
Brief, and yet endless.**

**"'Here eyes do regard you,
In Eternity's stillness;
Here is all fulness,
Ye brave, to reward you;
Work, and despair not.'"**

Goethe, translated by Carlyle

A VISIT TO CARLYLE'S ANNANDALE

COMING down that evening from Abbotsford and Melrose, I had crossed the border of England only to transfer at Carlisle to another train running northwesterly into bonny Scotland again, the best connection possible in the absence of any direct line between Melrose and Annan. The time-table gave me ten minutes at Carlisle but my train from the north was twenty minutes late and I despaired of making the transfer. There in the station, however, stood the Annan train, waiting faithfully on another track, and I rushed across the narrow footbridge, threading my way among hundreds of men and women returning from the Newcastle races, and finally deposited myself and all my belongings in the outgoing train the very instant it started upon its journey. An Annan resident, seated in the same compartment, obligingly pointed out the objects of interest along the way—the border country, Solway Firth in the misty distance, and Gretna Green, the town of doubtful fame as the scene of many a runaway marriage in the old days. We were at our destination in a half hour, just as night was closing in.

Annan makes a fitting center for a Carlyle pil-

grimage. It is described attractively in Sloan's admirable work, "The Carlyle Country," an indispensable guide for this entire region. The town is neat, clean, engaging. Well-built and substantial houses may be seen everywhere, proclaiming the thrifty and independent Scotch householder. There are 6000 inhabitants, twice the number that the town boasted a hundred years ago.

As a boy of ten Carlyle first became a resident of Annan in the year 1805. "Well do I remember," he tells us, in a scarcely-disguised autobiographic passage of Sartor Resartus, "the red sunny Whitsuntide morning, when, trotting full of hope by the side of Father Andreas, I entered the main street of the place, and saw its steeple-clock (then striking Eight) and *Schuldthurm* (Jail) and the aproned or disaproned Burghers moving-in to breakfast; a little dog, in mad terror, was rushing past; for some human imps had tied a tin kettle to its tail; thus did the agonized creature, loud-jingling, career through the whole length of the Borough, and become notable enough.....Alas, the kind beech-rows of Entepfuhl were hidden in the distance: I was among strangers, harshly, at best indifferently, disposed towards me; the young heart felt, for the first time, quite orphaned and alone."



Always always
G. Coghlin

For four years Thomas had a hard and unlovely experience in the Annan Academy and then went to Edinburgh for his University training, covering the one hundred miles on foot. In 1814, when he was nineteen years old, he accepted the mathematical tutorship in the Annan Academy. It is not his school days or his teaching days that we chiefly remember in connection with the town of Annan, but the close friendship that he formed with that other remarkable man, Edward Irving, whose meteoric career as a preacher was an important topic of conversation in Annandale at that period. "From the first," Carlyle wrote long years afterwards, "we honestly liked one another and grew intimate, nor was there ever, while we both lived, any cloud or grudge between us, or an interruption of our feelings for a day or hour." The old Irving clan still survives in Annan and the statue of Edward Irving is the most conspicuous object in the main street of the village.

That evening, after engaging a room at the Blue Bell Hotel, I spent an hour strolling in the half twilight through the streets of Annan. Everywhere I encountered that type of sturdy Scotch peasantry known so well to us in the family and in the person of Thomas Carlyle. The broad Annandale vernacular, differing a degree from any other speech I had

heard in Scotland, was on everyone's lips. Some of the men and women and nearly all of the children were wearing iron-soled shoes, which, I suppose, never wear out. A dozen children in such footgear, playing their games on the pavement, sounded like a troop of cavalry. Many of the buildings, especially on the side streets, undoubtedly present the same appearance as they did in Carlyle's day, for the generations bring few changes thereabouts in the general aspect of things. The very Blue Bell Hotel, with all its conveniences, savored, to my thinking, of the older history of the town.

The village of Ecclefechan, the birthplace of Carlyle, lies six miles to the north of Annan. Early in the morning of my second day I started off to cover that distance on a bicycle rented from one of the numerous Irving tribe. The storekeeper and one of his assistants and several of the neighbors stood at the door and watched me mount my steed. They had told me explicitly how to find the main road to Ecclefechan but through some perversity I promptly lost my way and was blundering along northeasterly toward Kirkpatrick when a good man set me right, sending me off up and down hill past green fields almost due north to Landheads where the roads part—the right hand branch pointing to

Kirtle Bridge and the left to Ecclefechan. A reader of Froude's interesting but too often inaccurate pages will be led to believe that Annandale is a bleak, cheerless and unattractive region. What it may be when the storms of winter are raging I do not know, but I saw it under smiling summer skies and I felt that few scenes, of a quiet sort, could excel it in beauty and charm. For the most part it is gently undulating, with few trees and few streams. Here and there, as at Landheads, the surrounding country in all directions may be seen for miles. In the brilliant June sunlight the country looked singularly engaging and I was well content to pause some minutes before continuing my journey.

The road was now winding down hill only a few miles from Ecclefechan. At the Mein Water bridge I paused again, looking across to the little town nestling behind a protecting hillside. A long row of beech trees, familiar to every reader of Sartor Resartus, pointed the way. No disciple of Carlyle could traverse this space and go on through the streets of the small village, past the church and the graveyard where Carlyle and his kin are buried and on to the "Arch House" where he was born, without deep emotion. When this experience came to me it was late in the morning of a drowsy day

and I seemed to be the only stranger in town. Through the windows of a long low building to the left I could hear the village schoolmistress setting a sum in arithmetic to her little flock. The town had a certain old-fashioned, old world look; the streets were bare and clean; the buildings were old and weather-beaten, but many of them newly whitewashed; everywhere severe simplicity and the appearance of frugality and independence. It struck me that all this was exactly as it should be.

There was no mistaking the "Arch House." That very house had been constructed by the two hands of James Carlyle, stone mason, and in it he and his wife Margaret had reared their large family of children. On that very stone outside the door over one hundred years ago had that young philosopher Thomas, the most remarkable of all that remarkable family, sat and mused looking down upon that little pebbly burn which trickles to-day as faithfully as ever. Listen to his thoughts as he records them in Sartor: "It struck me much, as I sat by the Kuhbach, one silent noontide, and watched it flowing, gurgling, to think how this same streamlet had flowed and gurgled, through all changes of weather and of fortune, from beyond the earliest date of History. Yes, probably on the morning when Joshua forded the Jordan; even as at the mid-

day when Caesar, doubtless with difficulty, swam the Nile, yet kept his *Commentaries* dry,—this little Kuhbach, assiduous as Tiber, Eurotas, or Siloa, was murmuring on across the wilderness, as yet unnamed, unseen: here, too, as in the Euphrates and the Ganges, is a vein or veinlet of the grand World-circulation of Waters, which, with its atmospheric arteries, has lasted and lasts simply with the world." "Happy season of Childhood!" he sings in another passage. "Kind Nature, that art to all a bountiful mother; that visitest the poor man's hut with auroral radiance; and for thy Nurseling hast provided a soft swathing of Love and infinite Hope, wherein he waxes and slumbers, danced-round by sweetest Dreams! If the paternal Cottage still shuts us in, its roof still screens us; with a Father we have as yet a prophet, priest and king, and Obedience that makes us free. The young spirit has awakened out of Eternity, and knows not what we mean by Time; as yet Time is no fast-hurrying stream, but a sportful sunlit ocean."

Old John Gourley I found to be the custodian of the "Arch House." He had been honored with this post for many years. Since the days of my visit he has gone to his reward. I trust that the present custodian has the same loyalty towards Carlyle as his predecessor. It was refreshing to see how

jealously the old man guarded the historical facts (as he understood them) connected with the Carlyle birth-house. He showed me the few small rooms that formed the Carlyle portion of the substantial double building, and he lingered with me in the birth room which is now a Carlylean museum of an unpretentious sort, showing me the while with a certain amount of pride one object after another connected in this way and that with Thomas Carlyle and his personal history. He turned the pages of the two visitors' books that had been filled in the preceding twenty-two years, pointing out dozens—I might almost say hundreds—of famous names. Probably few autograph collections in existence possess equal interest. Next the old man showed me the numerical record of visitors (outside of the British Isles) to the "Arch House" from October 1903 to June 1904: 31 from the United States, 7 from South Africa, 5 each from Canada, New Zealand and Italy, and so on, making a total of 60. Last of all John Gourley showed me his own little collection of books on Carlyle, inscribed with the authors' names, and then conducted me down the street to a small, cluttered-up shop and protected my interests as I bought some Ecclefechan photographs from a canny Scotchman whose

scale of prices was evidently adjusted to circumstances.

I would fain have lingered for a while at the "Arch House" as it impressed me powerfully. Carlyle never spoke of his experiences in that house but with affection and gratitude. "Frugality and assiduity," he wrote on the death of his father in 1832, "a certain grave composure, an earnestness (not without its constraint, then felt as oppressive a little, yet which now yields its fruit) were the order of our household. We were all taught that work (temporal or spiritual) was the only thing we had to do, and incited always by precept and example to do it well. An inflexible element of authority surrounded us all. We felt from the first (a useful thing), that our own wish had nothing to say in the matter."

Next I retraced my steps to the old burying-ground and stood at the Carlyle grave. There is a strong railing forming an enclosure in which may be seen the three upright tombstones of the family. The one to the right is inscribed with the names of several of the sons and daughters. The middle one, which, one fancies, is not as simple as Carlyle would have wished, marks the last resting place of Thomas Carlyle. The one to the left has almost equal interest, inscribed as it is with the

names of James and Margaret, the good father and mother, as well as others of the family. The mother's name is the last entry and is followed by the statement that four sons and three daughters survive, "gratefully reverent of such a father and such a mother." All the magnificent tributes that Thomas Carlyle rendered his parents seem to be summed up in those simple words. He regarded that old churchyard as "the sacredest place in all the world."

In the early afternoon I started off for Mainhill, the first farm of the Carlyles, which lies on the great north road, Lockerbie way, about two miles from Ecclefechan. Here James Carlyle, giving up his trade of mason, turned farmer. This was in 1815 while Thomas was teaching in the Annan Academy. For ten years he regarded Mainhill as his home though for the most part he was away at Annan and Edinburgh. Mainhill is itself connected with some of Carlyle's earliest endeavors in literature. Here he read Goethe's "Faust." Here he translated "Wilhelm Meister." Here he retreated for a brief period at least once each year. It witnessed that troubled period of his early manhood when those wrestlings of doubt and despair, so vividly described in Sartor Resartus as elsewhere, had laid hold upon him. That small low whitewashed building must be

to the lover of Carlyle one of the chief objects of attraction in all Annandale. I found it without difficulty and walked up boldly to the front door while the dogs barked at me. The obliging young woman who bade me welcome told me exactly the changes and additions that the house had undergone since the old days, conducted me into Margaret Carlyle's room, and took me out into the farmyard where there was a remnant of the old byre, the scene of the severest of the farm labors that the good mother, typical Scotchwoman as she was, was never known to shirk. Last of all my guide had me sign my name in a little paper-covered guest book; I was the only visitor in a number of months.

Mainhill stands a few hundred feet back from the road on a slight elevation, commanding a wide sweep of country in all directions. It is not a particularly picturesque or beautiful building but its appearance and situation are a hundredfold more pleasing than Froude's description implies. The driveway leading from the road to the farmhouse doubtless has the same appearance as it had seventy-five years ago. I lingered upon it, recalling the many home-comings and leave-takings it had witnessed,—and I picked some poor little buttercups growing by the roadside and placed them in my notebook.

It was pleasant also to remember the missives that had been sent from Mainhill to Tom in the faraway Edinburgh and from Tom to the home folk. His mother had never been taught to use the pen, but at Mainhill she essayed the task for Tom's sake, training her unaccustomed fingers, hardened and stiffened by the rough farm work, to their new task. "There perhaps never was a greater scrawl," she says in one of those letters to Tom; "wink at it." And again: "I long to have a craik, and look forward to August, trusting to see thee once more, but in hope the meantime.....Have you got through the Bible yet? If you have, read it againI received your present and was very proud of it. I called it 'my son's venison'..... We send you a small piece of ham and a mind-ing of butter, as I am sure yours is done before now.....Good night, Tom, for it is a very stormy night, and I must away to the byre to milk. Now, Tom, be sure to tell me about your chapters." "I received the bonnet," she writes in another letter; "it is a very good one. I doubt it would be very high." Most significant of all is the postscript to a letter written in 1819, in which the old Covenanter spirit flashes out: "Do make religion your great study, Tom: if you repent it, I will bear the blame forever."

Carlyle has written beautifully of the Mainhill period of his life. "Unwearied kindness, all that tenderest anxious affection could do, was always mine from my incomparable mother, from my dear brothers, little clever active sisters, and from everyone, brave father in his tacit grim way not at all excepted. There was good talk also; with mother at evening tea, often on theology (where I did at length contrive, by judicious endeavor, to speak piously and *AGREEABLY* to one so pious, *WITHOUT* unveracity on my part). Nay it was a kind of interesting exercise to wind softly out of those anxious affectionate cavils of her dear heart on such occasions, and get real sympathy, real assent under borrowed forms.. Oh, her patience with me! oh, her never-tiring love!"

One of the last but best remembered events at Mainhill was the visit of Jane Baillie Welsh in September, 1825. She had come over from Repentance Hill one day during her brief stay with Thomas Carlyle and his mother, who were living that year on a farm a few miles from Mainhill. Thus Sloan describes the incident: "The 'wee room down the house' was put at the service of the 'bonny leddy,' who was 'Tom's intended.' Miss Welsh observed there that Carlyle's sister, Margaret, with the high-born self-respect, and the well-bred sense of the

fitness of things, which were innate in the Carlyles, had covered the small, plain, deal table with a precious, new, colored shawl, the gift of a friend to herself. James Carlyle, then an old man of sixty-seven, was called in from farm work to receive the visitor. The girls kissed 'Tom's sweetheart,' while the old man shrank away and disappeared, a puzzle to the keen glance of the daughter-in-law to be. He soon returned new-shaved, washed and dressed in his best clothes. 'Now,' he remarked, 'if Miss Welsh will allow it, I am in a condition to kiss her too.' "

Returning to Ecclefechan, I journeyed away southwesterly to Repentance Hill. The road beyond the town runs between another row of magnificent beeches, past Hoddum Church, where are buried many connected in one way and another with the Carlyles and the good people of Ecclefechan in the old days, and on across the Annan River. At this point Hoddum Castle, with its extensive and beautiful grounds, is a prominent object. Beyond rises Repentance Hill crowned with the strange old pile of brick and stone known as "Repentance Tower." It was on this hillside that in 1825 Thomas Carlyle, then a man of thirty, tried his experiment in farming. Mainhill was then too small for the Carlyle family. It was proposed and agreed that a division of forces take place—that the mother,

Thomas, one other of the sons and two of the daughters set up a new establishment in a rented house on Repentance Hill, the remainder of the family staying behind at Mainhill. The year was an eventful one in the inner life of Carlyle. He was passing beyond the experiences described in the "Everlasting No" chapter of *Sartor Resartus* and entering upon the "Everlasting Yea." His marriage with Jane Welsh was in immediate prospect. For the first time a livelihood in his chosen pursuit of literature seemed possible. On Repentance Hill, then, were passed some of the pleasantest and most fruitful days of Carlyle's life. It is a great pity that the dwelling house used by the Carlyles no longer exists. But the Tower still stands and the same wonderful panorama that Carlyle loved is spread before the eyes of the visitor of to-day. "Such a view," Carlyle calls it, "as Britain or the world could hardly have matched."

I sat upon the steps of Repentance Tower and alternately read from a copy of *Sartor* that old John Gourley had lent me, and feasted my eyes on the landscape. What the view was may be learned in part from the following striking passage: "Beautiful it was to sit there, as in my skyey Tent, musing and meditating; on the high table-land in front of the Mountains; over me, as roof, the azure

Dome, and around me, for walls, four azure-flowing curtains,—namely, of the Four azure Winds, on whose bottom fringes also I have been gliding. And then to fancy the fair Castles that stood sheltered in these Mountain hollows; with their green flower-lawns, and white dames and damosels, lovely enough; or better still, the straw-roofed Cottages, wherein stood many a Mother baking bread, with her children round her:—all hidden and protectingly folded-up in the valley-folds; yet there and alive, as sure as if I beheld them. Or to see, as well as fancy, the nine Towns and Villages, which, in still weather, were wont to speak to me (by their steeple-bells) with metal tongue; and, in almost all weather, proclaimed their vitality by repeated Smoke-clouds; whereon, as on a culinary horologue, I might read the hour of the day.”

The visit of Jane Welsh to the Carlyles during that year on Repentance Hill has already been mentioned. “Her demeanor among us,” Carlyle wrote at the time, “I could define as unsurpassable, spontaneously perfect. From the first moment all embarrassment, even my mother’s, as tremulous and anxious as she naturally was, fled away without return. Everybody felt the all-pervading simple grace, the perfect truth and perfect trustfulness of

that beautiful, cheerful, intelligent, and sprightly creature, and everybody was put at his ease."

At the close of the year on Repentance Hill James Carlyle rented the farm called Scotsbrig near Middlebie about two miles northeast of Ecclefechan, and the two divisions of the family were re-united at that place. Thomas shortly after this married Miss Welsh and at no time thereafter was he a regular member of the family circle in Annandale. However, Scotsbrig, like Mainhill in the earlier days, was constantly in Carlyle's thoughts and while his mother lived he paid a visit there at least once a year. There he took a long holiday after he had completed any great literary undertaking. There after a life of service died the good mother, who meant more than life itself to Carlyle.

My next objective point, therefore, was this old farm of Scotsbrig. I had determined to reach it by a circuitous route in order that I might see a little of the valley of the Kirtle, and Kirkconnel Churchyard, and "fair Helen's grave." Retracing my way to Ecclefechan once more, I paid a last call at the "Arch House" and regretfully bade farewell to my friend John Gourley who was preparing his afternoon tea in the old Carlyle kitchen. A spin on my bicycle for a few miles brought me to the Kirtle and beyond to the small town called Kirtle Bridge.

At the Kirtle Bridge station Carlyle was accustomed to leave the train on his visits from London to Scotsbrig. In his earlier days he was doubtless familiar with the whole Kirtle valley. It furnishes some of the loveliest bits of scenery in Annandale. During the eventful days when the Carlyles had entertained Jane Welsh at Repentance Hill, one of the expeditions that she and Thomas had made was to Kirtle Bridge and to Kirkconnel Churchyard two or more miles to the north, close to the little Kirtle stream. Carlyle had promised to show Miss Welsh "fair Helen's grave." The romantic history connected with "fair Helen" and known to every inhabitant of Annandale need not detain us. For myself I had made up my mind to see if possible this interesting spot. It was a more difficult quest than I had supposed. After a full hour of searching—during which time I had alternated between hope and despair, hating to give up the time yet hating more to give up the endeavor—I stood at last in Kirkconnel churchyard by the side of the ruined and ivy-grown church. Nothing so beautifully desolate have I ever seen. Not a person, not a house, not a sound—the graveyard seemed to speak of a former generation, of a race of people that had wholly passed away.

My map now told me that to reach Middlebie and



CARLYLE'S MOTHER (at 71)

"A woman of to me the fairest descent—
that of the pious, the just and wise."

(Carlyle, in *Reminiscences*)

Scotsbrig I must swing around to the north and then turn westerly down hill. At Waterbeck, the turning place, a small town built, if I recall properly, along the length of a single street, I made some inquiries of a young woman in a shop, who said she "didna ken" but would ask her "fayther." So I got my bearings from a kindly old gentleman and, after a refreshing drink at the town pump, was off again—at about 5:30 in the afternoon.

There was trouble in store for me at this point and I, all unconscious, rushed into it. Coasting down a steep hill on the outskirts of the village of Middlebie—not in a reckless fashion but at a good clipping gait, of rthere was somewhat yet to be seen and it was a long cry to Annan and the Blue Bell Hotel and dinner—I found of a sudden that the road turned abruptly and I was facing a wire fence ten feet away. There was nothing to do but to turn abruptly with the road, whereupon the hero-worshipper was ignominiously hurled to the ground. The remainder of the down-hill journey was pursued afoot with an unridable bicycle, the rider being in a sufficiently bruised and dusty and discouraging condition. But, by rare good fortune, at the bottom of the hill was found the shop of a wagon maker who very cheerfully undertook to repair the bicycle,

and who pointed out a short cut across fields to Scotsbrig, the last home of the Carlyle family.

It proved a commodious farmhouse, with a finer prospect and more satisfactory in every way than either the "Arch House" or Mainhill. The men folk of the Scottish family who are now the tenants of Scotsbrig were in the fields gathering up their tools after the day's labor. I hurried on ahead of them and explained my errand to the good wife who, shod in great heavy shoes, was carrying a pail of milk from the byre to the house. While she was finishing her chores she bade me be seated in the kitchen, where a lubberly farm hand was making away with a great bowl of genuine Scotch porridge. He vouchsafed to me the information that he had been sleeping in Tom Carlyle's room three months noo and had never once thocht on it. There were indeed no hero-worshippers here. The good wife presently conducted me about in a perfectly matter-of-fact manner, no words wasted, few explanations given. But in some respects that was best, for the bare fact that this was the room which Thomas Carlyle used on his perennial visits, and that this other was the room where the mother breathed her last, was of absorbing interest and no comment was needed.

"Word that all is well in Annandale, though

written with the end of a burnt stick, is better to me than all the wit of poets." Thus Carlyle wrote to his brother Alick in 1827. The family feeling was always powerful in him. Many were the greetings sent from Scotsbrig to him and Jane Welsh Carlyle when they were in Edinburgh, and later on their moorland farm, and later still in London. The perennial visits of Carlyle were looked forward to eagerly by the people at home and to the same degree by Carlyle himself. Scotsbrig was a safe quiet haven for him, "his soul's wish being," as he described it, "to be left alone, to hear the music of the burn, and lie vacant, as ugly and stupid as he liked."

Five years after the removal to Scotsbrig James Carlyle, now somewhat over seventy years of age, died. The good mother met the sorrow heroically. "It is God that has done it. Be still, my dear children. Your affectionate mother. God support us all." Margaret Carlyle lived twenty-one years longer, years full of quiet service in her own home, and full of affection for her kin close at hand and far away. "My poor old mother," Carlyle wrote on one of his visits home, "met me once again on the close here with a moist radiance of joy in her old eyes."

In 1853 Margaret Carlyle visibly failed. As her strength was ebbing away Tom was sent for. He

writing;" and it is true that his mind matured and his literary style was perfected in this retreat. The next shifting of the household gods was to Cheyne Row in Chelsea, London,—the final home of the Carlyles—where Jane Welsh Carlyle died in 1866 and Thomas Carlyle in 1881. During their married life they had had but three habitations: Comely Bank, Edinburgh (eighteen months), Craigenputtock, and London. I had hoped to make the journey from Dumfries to Craigenputtock but, much to my regret, found that my time would not permit.

At "the Hill," a substantial home in Dumfries, lived Jean, Carlyle's favorite sister. He visited her there many times. A melancholy interest is attached to one of these occasions—in 1866, when Carlyle received at "the Hill" the tragic and unexpected news that his wife had died in London. He had come into Scotland to give his inaugural address as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University. His message to the students produced, it is clear from all reports, a profound impression. Tyndall sent to Mrs. Carlyle at her home in London a telegraphic message, laconic but significant: "A perfect triumph." As we read the lecture after the interval of fifty years, we feel something of the thrill that the auditors must have experienced on that notable April day. Immediately afterwards

Carlyle went to Scotsbrig, where he was detained for some days because of a sprained ankle. As soon as he was able to travel he crossed over to his sister Jean's, at Dumfries, and there received the fatal intelligence from London. "April 21, 1866, between three and four P. M., as near as I can gather and sift, suddenly, as by a thunderbolt from skies all blue she was snatched from me; a 'death from the gods,' the old Romans would have called it; the kind of death she many a time expressed her wish for; and in all my life (and as I feel ever since) there fell on me no misfortune like it; which has smitten my whole world into universal wreck (unless I can repair it in some small measure), and extinguished whatever light of cheerfulness and loving hopefulness life still had in it for me."

On leaving Dumfries my thoughts were centered, not on the sad events of 1866, but on that earlier happy period, in October 1826, when Carlyle, a youth of thirty-one had driven over with his brother John from Scotsbrig and had married Jane Baillie Welsh, a maiden of twenty-five, at Templand. Shortly before this the banns had been proclaimed in the kirk at Closeburn, a small town not far north from Dumfries.

Closeburn and Templand, therefore, were my next points of interest. It was about one o'clock when I

entered this romantic region. A pleasant breeze, just cool enough to temper the bright sunshine, was blowing. I left the train at Closeburn and walked the mile to Templand. The latter is a farm situated on a hillside looking down on the river Nith. It belonged then, as now, to the Duke of Buccleuch. In 1826 Mrs. Welsh and her daughter Jane lived at Templand. The farmhouse has probably changed but little in outward appearance in the interval. I found it without difficulty and before entering the enclosure stood for a few moments to enjoy the splendid view of the surrounding country that may be obtained from that hillside. The farm was rented by an old man and his wife, who were very kind when I explained my errand and took me into their sitting room where the three of us chatted for a few minutes. Then the good wife conducted me to an adjoining room, still handsome and with rich old-fashioned furnishings. "I doubtna," she said, "this will be the room where they were married." It meant something to me to stand there; and I think it would be an interesting experience for any one to have who was at all familiar with the domestic history that followed that marriage.

The affection between Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh, his wife, was beyond question deep and enduring. At the time of her marriage Jane



JANE BAILLIE WELSH (at 25)

(From a painting by Macleay executed in July 1826,
a few months before her marriage with Carlyle)

That same summer Carlyle wrote: "Everybody felt the all-pervading simple grace, the perfect truth and perfect trustfulness of that beautiful, cheerful, intelligent, and sprightly creature."

described Carlyle to her aunt as "a scholar, a poet, a philosopher, a wise and noble man, one 'who holds his patent of nobility from Almighty God,' and whose stature of manhood is not to be measured by the inch rule of Lilliputs." It was a noble tribute and there is no reason to think that her ideas changed as the years passed. Carlyle's own estimate of his wife may be found *in extenso* in his letters, in his journal, and in the Reminiscences. Mark also the words which he placed on her gravestone in Haddington Church: "In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common; but also a soft invincibility, a clearness of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart, which are rare. For forty years she was the true and ever-loving helpmate of her husband, and by word and act unweariedly forwarded him, as none else could, in all of worthy, that he did or attempted."

I am satisfied that Froude, with his determined special-pleading and his uncanny facility in distorting and disguising the facts, has done a great damage to the memory of the Carlyles. His inferences and conclusions are largely discredited in these days, however. Charles Eliot Norton is a safer guide, and these are his words: "Through all the dark vicissitudes of life, love did not desert them. Blame each of them as one may,

for carelessness, hardness, bitterness in the course of the years, one reads their lives wholly wrong unless he read in them that the love that had united them was beyond the power of fate and fault to ruin utterly; that more permanent than aught else, it abided in the heart of each, and that in what they were to each other it remained the unalterable element."

Leaving Templand I turned my steps to Holm Hill where the Russells lived from 1860 till the years of their deaths. Many of the Jane Welsh Carlyle letters were directed to Mrs. Russell at that place, and here both Jane and Thomas delighted to visit. The building is not a great distance from Templand. It also stands high and its grounds command a fine view of the river and the adjacent hills and valleys. I felt a little temerity in ringing the door bell, for the place appears quite grand in its way. Furthermore, the lady of the house was more of an aristocrat than one expects to find in a country district. But she, too, was very kind, and took me the rounds in a most gracious manner, and shook me by the hand when we parted. She showed me the small rustic seat that was made for Carlyle, in the grounds at the side of the house. There Thomas was wont to sit and smoke his pipe, when he was visiting at the Russell home. It was not placed where he could

look out over the landscape, for, as my guide said, he preferred to gaze at the stone wall. I know not whether she was right or not; she frankly averred that she did not care much for Carlyle! Her father, it seems, was well acquainted with the Russells, and she told me a number of facts regarding them.

I now returned to the main road and found myself in a short time in the old-fashioned village of Thornhill. It had come to my knowledge that Mrs. Broadfoot, the Jessie Hiddleston who was Mrs. Carlyle's last housemaid, was still living at Thornhill. So, if you please, I made bold to solicit an interview with so interesting a personage. I found her the mistress of an excellent modern house, with maids to wait upon *her* in her old age. And rarely have I met a more pleasant body. No wonder that Jane Carlyle considered her a treasure when she installed her—a young girl then—in the Cheyne Row household in 1865. She has undoubtedly been a sincere and capable person all her life.

Fortunately Mrs. Broadfoot did not consider my visit an intrusion but made much of it, talking away as fast as she could for the space of three quarters of an hour, honestly desirous of telling me just the facts that she thought I wanted to know. In the course of my call another visitor arrived and the maid thrust in her head to announce the fact, but

Mrs. Broadfoot said "I canna come" in a determined manner that closed all argument. She was a large woman, large featured and with good comfortable hands and feet. She would at once impress any one as a person to be trusted, and there was a most kindly and wholesome look in her eyes. At the same time, those eyes could flash fire, as I had an opportunity of observing.

In actual duration of time Jessie Hiddleston was with the Carlyles less than a year; but she told me that she might easily say she had known of them all her life. Jane Welsh knew her mother well and her mother knew Mrs. Russell well, and Thornhill never lacked for news of Cheyne Row. She told me that she had known who the Carlyles were ever since she was a "bit lassie." One time when Thomas Carlyle called upon her mother he had given the small girl a half sovereign and made her feel, she said, like a "wee queen." After that she always had money in the bank. She narrated all the circumstances leading up to her going with the Carlyles, and dwelt at length on the history of Mrs. Carlyle's death—all owing to the "wee dog," she said.

As to Froude, she "could have torn him to bits," but she was "calmed down some noo." It was a great satisfaction to me to see the outspoken attitude she took on that much debated question, since she was

one of the few persons then alive to decide the matter from first hand knowledge. All she said on the subject was direct and to the point, and uncompromisingly antagonistic to Froude's statements. For herself she had never seen the suspicion of a quarrel between the two during the period she was with them. In fact, Carlyle was "easy to deal wi'"—she said this over and over again.

She explained in an amusing way how Mrs. Carlyle went about it to get him to go to an evening reception or something else of the kind; how she would entertain the callers while he sat in his sound-proof study above,—and other incidents of that nature. Carlyle had his own set ways, but if these were tolerably observed, it was no trouble to keep him comfortable and contented in the household. Mrs. Broadfoot told me how she would fix his tobacco for him; what he ate for his meals; even what he wore, and facts regarding "clean shirt day"—all in the most delightful way, uttered in her broad Scotch accent.

She narrated at length Carlyle's treatment of strangers who called upon him, attracted by his great name. One such man, she said, had come repeatedly without being able to see Carlyle. Finally he arrived at an opportune time and Jessie ushered him in, explaining that this was the man who had

called so often before. She said that Carlyle stood in the center of the floor statue-like and said to the stranger—"Well, here I am noo; tak' a good look o' me." But, she said, the stranger must have made an impression on Carlyle for the two stayed in conversation a long time. If Carlyle did not fancy a visitor he would bow him out in short order, not in a surly but in a sufficiently decisive manner.

At night Carlyle had a very cumbersome way of preparing for his rest. He would recline on a couch, his head covered with a cap extending over his ears. Next would come a handkerchief over the ear which was exposed more openly to the distracting noises of the outside world, and last of all a second cap to make assurance doubly sure. The window would be opened a "bit crack" and the door left ajar, but with a cork home-made attachment to dull the sound if perchance it might slam.

Mrs. Broadfoot said that Mrs. Carlyle was just as clever as Carlyle himself and that grand people—she had seen "several carriages" at a time at the door—were proud to call upon her just to enjoy her conversation. She explained that Mrs. Carlyle had a very sharp tongue and when she wanted to would cut right and left. I was amused to learn Mrs. Broadfoot's estimate of her mistress' house-keeping. She volunteered the information that

Mrs. Carlyle had no knowledge of domestic matters, with all her ability in other directions. However, I am sure Mrs. Broadfoot had a great respect for mistress as well as master. It was evidently one of her dearest memories—that year in the Carlyle household. She would have gladly stayed on indefinitely after the death of Mrs. Carlyle had it not been that her marriage was in prospect. Indeed she had already given notice of the fact to Mrs. Carlyle in the spring, before her death, and Mrs. Carlyle was considerably vexed at the news, so Mrs. Broadfoot said.

At the last (I had taken every minute I could, and had to rush on for my train) she stood at the door and said, with a hearty handshake, "If ye'll be coming this way, call again, but ye mayna find me; I'm getting old noo."

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